

MEMORANDUM

TO: Honorable Ron Gonzales, Mayor, City of San Jose, members of City Council, and members of the CVSP Task Force

FROM: Frank K. Crane

SUBJECT: Coyote Valley Specific Plan, Observations on Task Force Meeting of 13 September 2004, 5:30 - 7:30 PM

DATE: September 19, 2004

Attached to this Memo is a list of observations on the recent Task Force Meeting on September 13 authored by my brother-in-law, Kazuto Mikami. I have been attending many of the Task Force Meetings as a representative for the Mikami Family - property owners in the Coyote Valley - and reporting the progress to the family. I was fortunate on the date of this latest meeting to invite Kazuto to attend with me since he was visiting San Jose from his home in Seattle. This was especially important because of his experience in architecture, urban design and planning and to add a fresh perspective to my limited viewpoint.

I believe you will find his observations to be thoughtfully presented and a sincere effort to be constructive towards the ultimate goal of the Coyote Valley reaching a successful development plan.

I request that copies of this Memo be distributed to the following:

- ☐ **Members of the City Council**
- ☐ **Appropriate representatives of the City Planning Staff, especially Salifu Yakuba**
- ☐ **All members of the CVSP Task Force**

Comments and Inquiries may be addressed by Email to Kazuto Mikami at mikamikazuto@att.net, or locally to me at: Frank K. Crane, 15050 Garcal Drive, San Jose, CA 951227. My telephone number is (408)258-9163, and my e-mail address is CRANEYF@aol.com

Respectfully,



Frank K. Crane

14 September 2004

COYOTE VALLEY SPECIFIC PLAN

Observations on Task Force Meeting of 13 September 2004, 5:30 - 7:30 PM

By: Kazuto Mikami, Property Owner

Introduction: I was invited by Frank Crane, my brother-in-law, to attend the above Task Force meeting. Frank has attended many prior public presentations at the request of the Mikami family, who are long time property owners in Coyote Valley. This is my first attendance since I live out-of-state.

1. Preliminary Cost of Implementing Construction of Infrastructure: After the meeting was adjourned, Frank Crane and I discussed the costs for implementing the project infrastructure. I found that in the summary of the 30 August Task Force meeting, a cost study was presented showing the preliminary range of \$600 million to \$800 million. Although substantial, it is not clear to me whether the range of costs is for the whole of the Project or only for the industrial development in the North Coyote area. It has been my experience that the cost of major project utilities - especially if under grounded - can be a significantly large part of the overall construction budget.

2. Vehicular Traffic: Hexagon Transportation Consultants uses the 2030 Travel Demand Model of the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority for vehicular traffic that will impact the core of the Coyote Valley Specific Plan. It, however, seems not to address vehicular traffic that passes through or skirts the central core of the Project along Hi-way 101, on Monterey Road, or on Santa Teresa Blvd. The impact of motorists trying to go through the central core on Santa Teresa seems to be ignored, and the Consultants avoid this existing desire by saying "This was a deliberate design effort to bring people into the core area as a destination and not to divide the core area with a major transportation route." Santa Teresa Boulevard is currently used as a second tier north-south transportation mode. Much of the Boulevard is now - or soon may be - four lanes with a parkway median strip inviting major traffic flow through the planned core of the Specific Plan. To ignore this traffic pattern will create future problems since the preliminary Plan does not specifically address this desire. The Plan shows Santa Teresa Boulevard banging into Palm Avenue from the south, and the presumption is that through traffic is diverted inconveniently to the east to Monterey Hi-way. Through traffic from the north must somehow filter through the planned town center, which will create problems not immediately desired and trigger future mitigation needs both disruptive and expensive. Is the desire for current and future through traffic on Santa Teresa so insignificant that it can be ignored? I believe not!

3. The impact of the Southern Pacific main line seems to be muted. I presume it will continue to be used for long freight trains as well as for Cal-Trains. There is a long uphill grade from Coyote to Palm Avenue and beyond to the south. Long freight trains loudly and noisily labor up this grade. And is Southern Pacific going to upgrade the trackage so that click-clack noise of rail car trucks running over rail joints is diminished significantly? All of these aggravating noises will affect development on both sides of the track and hi-way. Any development east of Monterey Hi-way and immediately west of the S.P. right of way may be treated by the public as inferior development, both on the 'wrong side of the tracks'.

4. Urban design is not expressed very well. With a few exceptions, the Coyote Valley Specific Plan seems to be mostly an exercise in two-dimensions. Photographs of existing development that are not architecturally significant are used extensively to illustrate Project urban design concepts. Word 'pictures' are also used extensively. If the Specific Plan is breaking new grounds in planning approach and urban design quality, the means of illustrating the vision and depth of

the Specific Plan seem to be woefully inadequate. Have the Consultants been asked to rise to this challenge?

5. Coyote Lake is no more a natural lake than is the far larger Anderson Reservoir. It is also far removed from Coyote Creek and would be better named Fisher Pond. It appears that 'Fisher Pond' does not have an outlet but is fed by the Fisher Canal. Fisher Creek - by definition - is dry for a substantial part of the year. The design levels of the 'Pond' and the Canal must, therefore, be maintained by water from an outside source. The head of the Canal must also be isolated from the course of Fisher Creek by a dam so that the year round levels can be maintained.

The Project water bodies also will function for flood retention. In the early 1950's, California experienced almost a month of steady but not hard rains. After two weeks, the waters of Anderson Reservoir spilled over the spillway, an event the design engineers had never predicted nor anticipated. Coyote Creek became a raging torrent about a quarter of a mile wide. Many old fishing holes disappeared by the scouring effect of the flood; I do not recollect new fishing holes ever being created as good as the old. The 101 Freeway did not then exist, and people on the east, right bank of Coyote Creek had to be evacuated by helicopter. It does not appear that Fisher Pond will be able to handle another rare event such as this in the way it is now configured. The Project hydrologists may need to analyze the impact of such a similar event.

Since it appears that 'Fisher Pond' does not have an outlet, natural water flow to promote the quality of the Pond waters does not seem to be possible. It appears that the quality of the Pond waters may degrade to such a point that recreational activities in the waters would not be advisable, and I don't think the fountain indicated on the Plan will prevent water degradation during the heat of the summer. The Project hydrologists need to analyze the impact of water degradation and its prevention.

Another incongruity is the design of the northeast end of the Pond, which creates a hard edge while the remainder of the Pond appears to emulate the 'natural'? And swimming beaches seem to be almost deficient for a feature that should encompass the entire perimeter of the 'Pond' - given the design population that will inhabit the total Project area. I strongly suggest that the landscape architects take another and more thorough look at these features.

The Plan indicates grassed areas along the shore. The water bodies will attract water fowl that will graze the areas of grass. While grazing, they will foul the grassed areas and make their use impossible by residents of Coyote Valley. The landscape design needs to respond to this eventuality.

6. The Commons: The graphic perspective that illustrates The Commons emphasizes the view of the Diablo Range and the western coastal range that one has down the corridor of The Commons in both directions. Both ranges are so dominant when viewed from anywhere within the site that this connection does not require emphasis.

Mention had been made that The Commons will be used as a wildlife migration corridor for, I presume, raccoons, possums, coyotes, etc. Raccoons and coyotes are already attracted to urban areas as a sources of food and do not require encouragement for night time incursions; they'll be there no matter the best of intentions. The preliminary Plan indicates numerous green access ways through Coyote Valley in all directions that will allow wild life migration. In fact, I don't think the close proximity of wild life will be at all appreciated by the residents of The Valley because of their danger to both human and the domestic animal population.

7. The Diablo Range and the Coastal Range: Mention was made about maintaining the integrity of the view scape that both of these ranges offer for the Valley below. What is the mechanism

which will maintain this integrity? Market demands will soon see development marching up both slopes. The landfill to the southeast has already compromised the view scape.

8. Campus Development: Light industrial development that emulates an academic campus is a desirable feature for those that work within such a complex. The 'campus' concept is certainly desirable when compared with industrial buildings set within seas of asphalt. But the general public is not naturally attracted to such facilities and is often discouraged from entering by visual cues.

9. Tilt-up Architecture: Construction that depends predominantly on tilt-up construction has a 'sameness' in appearance regardless of the best intentions of the designers. Although tilt-up construction is economically very viable, such are not visually nor architecturally of significance. Today's tilt-up complexes are tomorrow's slums!

10. The Coyote Greenbelt: It appears that the Specific Plan views the Greenbelt zone as a step-child. If the cities of San Jose and Morgan Hill and the Santa Clara County are to ensure its viability, a practical and equitable Master Plan must be funded and developed if its continued existence is to be assured for the near and the far future.

One of the reasons I am visiting the San Jose area was to attend the 50th reunion of the Live Oak Union High School. I sat across the banquet table from Ron Fantozzi, whose family long farmed in the Morgan Hill area. I knew that Ron now farms in the Central Valley, and I asked him why he had moved his farming operations from his traditional family farmstead. His response was that he no longer could maintain his farming operation in this area and was forced to move. He did not elaborate as to the source of the force. But I only tell you this anecdote to show that farming in this area is now very difficult if not impossible, a situation well known to area farmers. Normal market forces seem to discourage area farming and must be counteracted by other supportive forces – forces to be identified by a proper agricultural Master Plan.

11. The Hamlet of Coyote: My family has long had an inherent interest in Coyote. This interest continues to this day, and I have a strong incentive to contribute towards the good of the Valley's future.

I lived from 1945 to 1950 in Coyote and attended Encinal Grammar School, then a two room, Mission style school house. The hamlet of Coyote in 1950 consisted of six major structures: the Grange Hall, the Coyote road house, the post office, the old stage barn, a hay barn, and the Southern Pacific warehouse and station as well as many other smaller structures. Coyote was so small you did not see it if you blinked while driving through it.

On the east side of the then three lane, undivided El Camino Real, the Kruse service station and garage and detached SF residence anchored the northern end. Hi-way 101 was then configured as one outside lane northbound and the other southbound. The middle lane was for passing in both directions. Oftentimes, vehicles going in opposite directions pulled out to pass at the same time. The count of traffic fatalities on this hi-way, needless to say, was very high. On the north edge of the Kruse property, a road to the Hart Residence forded Coyote Creek during low flows. The Grange Hall was the Kruse neighbor to the south. The structure to its south was a two-story wooden structure, which then housed the 'Longest Bar in Coyote' and the general store on the ground floor. The quarters of the owners were in the back. The second floor housed a now unused hotel for passengers on the long defunct San Jose-Salinas stage. I would guess sometime in the '30's, several small motel cabins were built around the perimeter of the road-house compound. The small wooden post office adjoined the one-time road house. A driveway south of the post office lead to the old, classic stage barn, which was set back from the hi-way about 100'. The stage barn was part of the farm property leased for many years by my grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. Sukesaburo Ota. Their tenure spanned from the 1930's to the 1950's

and was interrupted only by WWII. A part of the leased field separated the hay barn from the post office; a large cattle corral was attached to the rear, eastern end of the hay barn. The era of the cowboy and of cattle drives was then alive and well.

Development on the west side of the hi-way was more extensive in real estate than on the east side. A D.O.T. truck weigh station anchored the northern end. Just south of a rail road crossing was a funky, stone service station and detached cafeteria. A fenced compound, which I believe was residential, was next. At the southwest, rear corner of this compound was the old Southern Pacific railroad station and the S. P. warehouse, a huge wooden structure. A large, elevated water tank was situated along the railroad track, and a movable, large diameter spout was used to fill the reservoir of steam locomotives. This operation was a memorable sight for the impressionable young boys we were then. A service station and garage was located in front of the warehouse. A loading ramp onto cattle cars defined the formal, southern edge of the west side of Coyote, but several residences were slightly removed further south, which then housed workers for the Southern Pacific. Range cattle were at that time driven across 101 El Camino Real from the corrals through a chute on the south side of the hay barn.

Such is the real estate history of old Coyote. We cannot go back to that era, but hopefully much of the photographic records are preserved and can be made available for a future historical display for new residents to view and appreciate the heritage of the Valley.

12. The four Mikami siblings have inherited the Mikami farm at Rte. 2, Box 561-A – a farm, which currently is fallow.

Kazuto Mikami, Architect

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